

On 22 June 1941, Hitler launched Operation Barbarossa. Reports sent by the SS and Nazi police units mopping up behind the German lines revealed the systematic murder of tens of thousands of Jews. The decrypts of these reports were compiled and signed by de Grey. They were passed directly to Churchill, who circled the numbers killed in red ink and signed each one with his initials, WSC.

Fortunately, the German reports were enciphered in a relatively simple hand cipher, rather than Enigma. This meant on 24 August 1941, incensed by the killing of the Jews, the British Prime Minister was able to make a BBC broadcast denouncing the "scores of thousands of executions in cold blood". He continued: "Since the Mongol invasions of Europe, there has never been methodical, merciless butchery on such a scale. We are in the presence of a crime without a name."